

CHAMBERS'S JOURNAL

OF
POPULAR

LITERATURE, SCIENCE, AND ART.

Fourth Series

CONDUCTED BY WILLIAM AND ROBERT CHAMBERS.

No. 778.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 23, 1878.

PRICE 1½d.

TALKERS.

Who does not like to hear a really good talker—whether in the public room or the private circle? Men may glibly quote the adage, 'Speech is silver but silence is golden;' yet it must be acknowledged that the silent man is, as a rule, at a great disadvantage, compared with his neighbour who can use his tongue well, and is as the phrase goes 'good company.'

But how comparatively few are the talkers with whom we can find no fault! Some are too egotistical, others too censorious. One man annoys us by being too argumentative; another by assenting too readily to all that we say, and thus, anomalous as it may seem, blocking the road to conversation, by sheer want of obstruction. Then there are the double-tongued talkers, the inquisitive, and the grandiloquent; all of whom are objectionable.

On the subject of 'talkers,' an interesting book has been recently written by Mr Bate, and in it we find the above classes and many others dwelt upon. Of most varieties, illustrations are given, and without attempting to enter into the subject further, our purpose is simply to bring a few of these illustrations before our readers. In the chapter devoted to 'the egotist' we have an excellent example of how one of those worthies was served:

"I was to dine with the Admiral to-night," said a naval lieutenant once; "but I have so many invitations elsewhere that I can't go."

"I am going, and I'll apologise," said a brother-officer.

"O don't trouble yourself."

"But I must," said the officer; "for the Admiral's invitation, like that of the Queen, is a command."

"Never mind; pray, don't mention my name," rejoined the lieutenant.

"For your own sake, I certainly will," was the reply.

'At length the hero of a hundred cards stammered

out: "Don't say a word about it; I had a hint to stay away."

"A hint to stay away! Why so?"

"The fact is I—wasn't invited."

Egotists are an intolerable set of bores. Everything they say is interlarded with 'I;' it is I, I, throughout. Into all conversations they drag allusions to themselves. In some cases their egotism is grotesque, but usually offensive. It should be part of education to put young persons on their guard against interlarding their conversation with 'I.' Lord Erskine was a great egotist. One day in conversation with Curran, he casually asked what Grattan said of himself. This was a splendid opportunity for Curran giving Lord Erskine an indirect set-down.

'Said of himself!' was Curran's astonished reply. 'Nothing. Grattan speak of himself! Why sir, Grattan is a great man. Sir, torture could not wring a syllable of self-praise from Grattan; a team of six horses could not drag an opinion of himself out of him. Like all great men, he knows the strength of his reputation, and will never condescend to proclaim its march, like the trumpeter of a puppet-show. Sir, he stands on a national altar, and it is the business of us inferior men to keep up the fire and incense. You will never see Grattan stooping to do either the one or the other.'

Curran objected to Byron's talking of himself as a great drawback on his poetry. 'Any subject,' he said, 'but that eternal one of self! I am weary of knowing periodically the state of any man's hopes or fears, rights or wrongs. I would as soon read a register of the weather; the barometer up to so many inches to-day, and down so many inches to-morrow. I feel scepticism all over me at the sight of agonies on paper—things that come as regular and notorious as the full of the moon.'

How a simple statement may be twisted, turned, and magnified by the tongues of tale-bearers is well illustrated by the following, which is said to have actually occurred:

"The servant of No. 1 told the servant of No. 2 that her master expected his old friends the Bayleys to pay him a visit shortly; and No. 2 told No. 3 that No. 1 expected to have the Bayleys in the house every day; and No. 3 told No. 4 that it was all up with No. 1, for they couldn't keep the bailiffs out; whereupon No. 4 told No. 5 that the officers were after No. 1, and that it was as much as he could do to prevent himself being taken in execution, and that it was nearly killing his poor dear wife; and so it went on increasing and increasing until it got to No. 32, who confidently assured the last, No. 33, that the Bow Street officers had taken up the gentleman who lived at No. 1 for killing his poor dear wife with arsenic, and that it was confidently hoped and expected that he would be executed!"

The most amusing chapter in the book is that devoted to the 'inquisitive' talker, and, as a matter of course, our author crosses the Atlantic for some of his specimens of this kind.

"A genuine Yankee in San Francisco having bored a new-comer with every conceivable question relative to his object in visiting the gold country, his hopes, his means, and his prospects, at length asked him if he had a family.

"Yes sir; I have a wife and six children, and I never saw one of them."

"After this reply the couple sat a few minutes in silence, then the interrogator again commenced:

"Was you ever blind sir?"

"No sir."

"Did you marry a widow sir?"

"No sir."

"Another interval of silence.

"Did I understand you to say sir, that you had a wife and six children living in New York and had never seen one of them?"

"Yes sir; I so stated it."

"Another and a longer pause. Then the interrogator again inquired: "How can it be sir, that you never saw one of them?"

"Why," was the response, "one of them was born after I left."

We are not told to what country the individual belonged who got so well matched in the following story, but we will hope that he was not English or Scotch. 'A person more remarkable for inquisitiveness than good-breeding—one of those who, devoid of delicacy and reckless of rebuff, pry into everything—took the liberty to question Alexander Dumas rather closely concerning his genealogical tree.

"You are a quadroon, Mr Dumas?" he began.

"I am sir," replied M. Dumas, who had seen enough not to be ashamed of a descent he could not conceal.

"And your father?"

"Was a mulatto."

"And your grandfather?"

"A negro," hastily answered the dramatist, whose patience was waning.

"And may I inquire what your great-grandfather was?"

"An ape sir!" thundered Dumas, with a fierceness that made his impertinent interrogator shrink into the smallest possible compass—"an ape sir! My pedigree commences where yours terminates."

We next give two specimens of the 'pleonast,' whose conversation is full of inflated expressions.

"A certain gentleman was once speaking to a few friends on the subject of happiness, and in giving his experience as to where it could not be found, he is said to have spoken thus: "I sought for happiness where it could not be found; I looked for felicity where it could not be discovered; I inquired after bliss in those places, situations, and circumstances which neither bliss, nor felicity, nor happiness ever visited. Thus it remained with little change, and continued without much alteration, all through the days of my youth, the years of my juvenility, and the period of my adolescence."

"Is that really your experience?" said one who was listening; "and do you intend that as a caution to us against seeking happiness in the same way?"

"Most positively and assuredly I do. Profoundly impressed with the veracity of these sentiments, deeply sensible of their correctness, and heartily persuaded and assured and convinced of their consonance with truth, I urge and press upon your attention what I have above and before couched and expressed in such simple and plain and intelligible language, and language easily to be understood withal."

"Another of these talkers who encumber their ideas with such "a plethora of words" was once speaking of a man who was found drowned in a canal in the neighbourhood where he lived, and expressed himself thus: "He is supposed to have perpetrated, committed, and done voluntarily, willingly, and of himself, destruction, suicide, and drowning, while in a mood of mental aberration; superinduced, brought about, and effected by long indulgence in and continued habits of inhaling, drinking, and swallowing, to inebriation and drunkenness, intoxicating fluids."

These specimens are only exaggerations, for it is difficult to believe that any one would speak in such a ridiculous fashion. We do not however, experience the same difficulty in accepting the following illustration of the double-tongued talker.

"What darling little cherubs your twins are," said Mrs Horton to Mrs Shenstone in an afternoon gathering of ladies at her house. "I really should be proud of them if they were mine; such lovely eyes, such rosy cheeks," &c. Adding: "Dear darlings! come and kiss me."

"Mrs Shenstone smiled complacently in return, and shortly after retired from the room, when the two "little cherubs" approached their prodigious admirer, with a view to make friends and impress upon her the solicited kiss. Instantly however, she put them at arm's-length from her, saying to the lady who sat next her: "What pests these little things are, treading on my dress and obtruding their presence on me like this! I do wish Mrs Shenstone had taken them out of the room with her."

The following are amongst the illustrations of the grandiloquent style of talk, and with these we conclude our paper.

A minister—and one of the fraternity, namely the Rev. Paxton Hood, is quoted as the authority for the story—described a tear as 'that small particle of aqueous fluid, trickling from the visual organ over the lineaments of the countenance, betokening grief.'

Another minister, speaking in the presence of a few friends, who had met for the purpose of promoting the interests of a certain Young Men's Christian Association, relieved himself in the following manner: 'When I think of this organisation with its complex powers, it reminds me of some stupendous mechanism which shall spin electric bands of stupendous thought and feeling, illuminating the vista of eternity with coruscations of brilliancy, and binding the mystic brow of eternal ages with a tiara of never-dying beauty; whilst for those who have trampled on the truth of Christ, it shall spin from its terrible form, coils of eternal funeral bands, darker and darker, till sunk to the lowest abyss of destiny!'

A certain American was once talking of Liberty, when he said: 'White-robed Liberty sits upon her rosy clouds above us; the Genius of our country, standing on her throne of mountains, bids her eagle standard-bearer wind his spiral course, full in the sun's proud eye; while the Genius of Christianity, surrounded by ten thousand cherubim and seraphim, moves the panorama of the milky clouds above us, and floats in immortal fragrance—the very aroma of Eden through all the atmosphere!'

TWICE WOODED, TWICE WON.

IN THREE CHAPTERS.—CHAPTER II.

THE day fixed for the marriage was the 18th of July. The weather was lovely; my heart heavy when I stepped into the carriage which was sent to convey me to the church. Roland was already there. A few minutes afterwards, the bride, accompanied by her mother, joined us. Claudia was white as marble till her eyes met those of her enamoured bridegroom. She was elegantly yet simply dressed for travelling, as they were to leave town for Dover immediately after the ceremony. Roland's carriage was standing at the church door waiting to take them the first stage of their journey. And yet I was outwardly calm. I heard the words of that solemn service as one in a dream. It was over; and I was awakened by Roland gaily introducing Claudia as 'Mrs Mornington.' He looked radiant, and would have hurried her from the vestry to the carriage; but the mother and daughter, who had so far borne up bravely, now fairly broke down, and wept in each other's arms. Roland's countenance instantly changed; the forbidding expression I knew so well, stole over it; his face flushed darkly, and he made a sign to me to put an end to this affecting scene. I obeyed; and gently drawing Claudia from the mother's arms, I placed her in charge of her husband, who in his vexation scarcely offered his arm to receive her.

'Ah! how much safer,' I thought, 'was she in that tender maternal embrace than with one who could already feel displeased with his gentle bride.' Happily she knew it not; and by the time they reached the carriage Roland was again radiant, Claudia smiling through her tears. Then came more fond adieus. Another moment, they were gone.

It had been arranged that Madame Francini should go at once to Mornington Hall, and superintend the alterations and improvements

which were to be made during the absence of the newly married pair; so my next task was to escort that lady to the station, from which she was to start for her journey to Yorkshire. We parted with a promise on my part to pay her a visit on my way to the moors in August. It was fortunate for me that I was more than usually engaged for the remainder of the term. I had scarcely time to think. By degrees however, I became more reconciled, even trying to persuade myself that the woman I loved was happy.

The first week in August brought me a characteristic missive from my aunt, summoning me to M'Ivor Castle. 'In a few days,' she wrote, 'the house will be full of men. How is a poor lone woman to cater for their amusement? Pray, come at the very earliest date.—Archie is quite well, and joins in best love with yours distractedly,

FRANCES M'Ivor.'

My arrangements were accordingly made for my annual visit to the north, this time varied by the short one I had promised to Madame Francini. I arrived at the *Mornington Arms* early on a lovely evening, which tempted me to stroll across the park to the Hall. It was a stately old mansion, approached by a magnificent avenue of chestnuts, the extent of which gave me a longer walk than I expected. Madame Francini received me most cordially; and when I had done justice to the hospitable fare provided for me, she asked me if I would inspect the improvements, which were now completed, for the reception of the wedded pair. She shewed me with evident pride and satisfaction the elegant suite of apartments which had been appropriated to her own use.

'I must say,' she cheerfully remarked, 'that my son-in-law has done me much honour—these beautiful rooms having been his mother's.'

I observed that these were in the opposite wing to that which would be occupied by Roland and his wife. 'Where were they when you last heard from them?' I inquired.

'Claudia last wrote from Rome,' was the answer. 'At first, I received a letter nearly every day; latterly, not so often. They were going to leave when she wrote, which she seemed rather to regret; her artistic taste would, I know, be so charmed there. But they have never stayed more than two or three days in one place, Roland seems so to like change.'

I sighed, for this disposition seemed to me far from favourable to domestic happiness; but left Madame Francini full of the joyful anticipation of receiving her daughter in the splendid home which was prepared for her.

The following day I arrived at my aunt M'Ivor's Highland castle, and was soon immersed in all the arrangements for the forthcoming Twelfth and the guests the day would bring. The lively party, the shooting, and above all the thorough change of scene and occupation, were of great service to my health and spirits. This and my aunt's urgent request induced me to stay to the very last day of the long-vacation, or I should again have broken my journey home at Mornington Hall; not that I should have seen the newly married pair, for Madame Francini had written to tell me they were still abroad—she believed in Paris; but Claudia wrote so very seldom, that she could not be sure. She was almost tired, she

said, of expecting them, they had so often disappointed her. Poor mother! I know what the hope deferred must be to her. I was not much surprised at Roland's silence, for I knew it was his nature to be completely engrossed by the one object which interested him, whatever it might be, for the time. I sincerely hoped that this engrossing object of interest might still be his young wife.

They remained on the continent—as I heard from Madame Francini—still constantly travelling from place to place till November. They had then written to announce their intended return to England; but a second letter—this time from Roland—told the anxious mother that Claudia not being well enough to travel, they would delay their return home till nearer Christmas, and remain at Paris quietly on her account for the ensuing six weeks.

In vain Madame Francini pleaded that if her daughter were ill, she would be better under her care. A short and constrained letter from Claudia told her that she had no doubt Roland was right, and that she hoped to be quite well by the time now finally fixed for their meeting.

About the same time I received a short note from Roland, slightly alluding to his wife's delicate health. 'She is however, much better in Paris than cooped up in a country-house where there is nothing to amuse her. For my part,' he wrote, 'I quite dread the dullness of Mornington. But I suppose we must be there before Christmas. I hope you will be charitable, and spend the so-called festive season with us.'

It was quite impossible for me to accept this invitation. In the first place, my father and mother would have felt themselves slighted had I done so; and secondly, I had resolved not to throw myself voluntarily into Claudia's society; so I at once declined it. The next note I received from Roland told me that they were at length at home, and that he was much vexed at my refusal to join their party. But not a word from either Claudia or her mother; which struck me as being singular. Still I hoped that all was well.

After this, I heard nothing whatever from the family at Mornington Hall till the end of May, when Madame Francini wrote to inform me of the birth of a grandchild; that the young mother's life had been in extreme danger, but that she was slowly recovering, and that Roland was much vexed and disappointed that the infant was a girl.

'Ungrateful wretch!' was my heart's bitter cry. 'Why should this man have the choicest blessing heaven can give heaped upon him? all undeserving as he is—so incapable of appreciating so precious a gift!'

I wrote a few lines of genuine congratulation to him; which elicited the following heartless reply:

DEAR GERALD—Thanks for your good wishes and felicitations. They are well meant, I know; but when you have been married a year, if you do not wish yourself well out of the scrape, you are very unlike yours always,

ROLAND MORNINGTON.

The blow had fallen upon her then. His fickle shallow nature had tired of the rare flower so recklessly culled. He had hurried into a marriage which he now deplored as an inconvenient restraint, and for which he blamed his

innocent and unoffending wife. This then was the reason of the mother's silence. I saw it all. It was clear that situated as she was, she could not betray the secrets of the household; yet something must be done to rescue that young life from misery, if possible. I used to have some little influence over Roland; so I resolved to propose a visit to the Hall, that I might judge of the real state of affairs there. I addressed my note to Mrs Mornington, in case he should be from home. A rather formal reply from Claudia informed me that her husband was in Paris, and that glad as they would be to see me, she and her mother thought it would be more agreeable to me to visit them when he was at home.

I was much disappointed. I could not force myself upon them; still my anxiety for Claudia's welfare induced me to make another effort to see her. I wrote once more from M'Ivor Castle in the autumn, proposing to take Mornington on my way home, should Roland have returned by the end of October and I hear nothing to the contrary. But at the time I should have left Scotland for this visit, Madame Francini wrote to say that Roland was still on the continent; adding that Claudia and the baby were well.

'Thank God for that!' I sighed. 'But still something must be terribly wrong.'

Months rolled on; my thwarted love and the sorrow which it brought were gradually yielding to the healing influence of time; my profession, ever increasing, was more and more absorbing, and my young ward at M'Ivor Castle becoming more interesting to me. During my last visit to his mother, Archie and I had become fast friends, and now we corresponded. It was early spring; the great square inclosure before the windows of my business quarters—so misnamed 'fields'—was for a brief period looking fresh and verdant. The fine genial weather had raised my spirits, and I was smiling over the little Baronet's last epistle, in which he informed me that he now knew the Church Catechism, when my clerk handed me a card, saying that the lady wished to see me. Ah, that name! The revulsion of feeling it caused was so overwhelming that then, then I knew my heart's dear love had only slumbered. It was not dead.

My visitor was Madame Francini. I received her with suppressed emotion. She was pale and breathless.

'I fear, madame,' I said, 'my stairs have fatigued you; pray, be seated.'

'It is not your stairs, dear Mr Burgogne, which have affected me; it is the painful nature of my errand to you.'

I started. 'Your daughter is, I trust, well?'

'It is indeed of my Claudia I would speak,' she sobbed.

'Pray, dear lady, be composed, and try to allay my fears. She lives?' I hoarsely whispered.

'She exists,' was the answer.

I drew a long breath of relief.

But she mournfully continued: 'Her life is a living death. You know her well enough, Mr Burgogne, to be sure that it is for no trivial reason she wishes to be separated from her husband, and for that separation to be if possible a divorce.'

I started from my chair. 'Has it really come to this?' I asked, trembling with indignation.

'I repeat it,' said the agonised mother; 'for

Claudia there remains but divorce, or death.' She pointed to a carafe of water which stood upon my table. I hastened to add some wine, of which she was greatly in need. As she returned the glass, she said: 'Now I will try to tell my miserable story.' With great difficulty controlling her emotion, she reminded me of our last meeting at Mornington Hall. 'You found me,' she said, 'preparing for the reception of my beloved child and the husband of her love, at their home. You left me anticipating with all a mother's joy the great happiness of that meeting, indulging the fond hope of passing the remainder of my life in that home with my children. That dream was short—the awakening, the night of their arrival. The moment I saw my Claudia in a well-lighted room, I was painfully struck by the sad change in her. She looked worn and thin, with a vivid flush on her cheeks which made her eyes unnaturally bright. Roland had stayed at the hall entrance giving orders to his coachman, as if he had merely been out for an ordinary drive. This surprised me. But my attention was at the moment arrested by Claudia's exhausted condition. She sank upon a sofa directly she was relieved of her wraps, saying she was so fatigued that she would rather go to bed at once, and have some tea taken up-stairs. Before I had time to answer, Roland threw open the door and entered with considerable noise. He took my proffered hand somewhat roughly; then immediately seating himself at table, expressed a hope that there was something fit to eat, for the voyage had given him a powerful appetite. I was thunder-struck by this behaviour. Was this the courteous gentleman who but a few months before had thanked me so affectionately for giving him my one treasure? I just managed to ask him to excuse us, as Claudia was unable to sit up any longer.

"Oh! tired as usual, I suppose!" he exclaimed with a sneer. "Your daughter, madame, has grown quite a fine lady."

"I should have answered him as he deserved, if Claudia had not given me an imploring look; so in silence I was leading her from the room, when he called out: "Mind, I won't be disturbed to-night."

She made no answer. As we slowly ascended the stairs, she said in a broken voice which went to my very heart: "Take me to your room, dear mamma."

"I hesitated. "Is it wise to offend him, my darling?" I asked.

"I would not risk his displeasure for the world," she replied. "But this will not offend him; you heard what he said."

"I was greatly shocked. What could have wrought this change? Still," added Madame Francini, "I forbore to distress her with questions. I had a sensitive dread of anything like interference between the husband and wife.

"For the greater part of that night I sat up beside my darling long after she had sighed herself to sleep. Bewildered and sorely grieved at this unexpected downfall of all my hopes, one source of consolation was left to me. I found she was likely to become a mother. This circumstance somewhat allayed my first fears for her health; but others succeeded. I therefore sent for the family doctor the following morning, on my own responsibility. Never shall I forget

my anxious suspense during his searching questions. However, he at last gave his opinion that his patient was only suffering from excessive fatigue caused by over-travelling; and ordered that she should not leave her bed for at least a week.'

I have thus far, as well as I can recollect, given Madame Francini's account in her own words; but I must condense the sad recital. It was that of a succession of insults to both mother and daughter; the former enduring all for the sake of her child. At one time, the idea occurred to her that *her* presence in the house might be distasteful to her son-in-law, and she resolved, painful as the parting would be, to propose leaving. She entreated him to be candid with her on the subject. He then told her he preferred, as he expressed it, 'to have some one with common-sense in the house, one too who never seemed tired of being shut up with an invalid; an existence,' he added, 'which would kill him in a week.'

Thus convinced that she was necessary to her son-in-law as well as to her own child, Madame Francini took her position in the house with somewhat more comfort to herself. She was all in all to Claudia, who, after returning the calls of the neighbouring county families, was unable to go more into society. The only peace she enjoyed was during her husband's frequent absences from home. At such times the mother and daughter enjoyed each other's society, by tacit and mutual consent avoiding all conversation relating to Roland, who now scarcely took the trouble to conceal his aversion to all connected with his unfortunate wife. It had absolutely become necessary that a separation should take place; and it was imperative that the assistance of the law be now sought.

"I can prove gross acts of cruelty," said Madame Francini. "It was he who endangered her life before her child was born, and frequently since, in his rage"—

"Good heavens, madame," I interrupted, "have you then ventured to leave her with him?"

"No. He left home yesterday for Paris."

I was pacing the room—my way when agitated. Now I sat down again, and prepared to take notes of her communication.

"I know," continued Madame Francini, "that Claudia could tell of many acts of violence which she kept from me. I was witness to some. The first was that to which I have just alluded."

She then told me that one evening when Roland was as usual from home, she and her daughter were together in their usual sitting-room, which opened with French-windows upon a terrace overlooking the park. Their conversation turned upon the old days when music was at once their chief occupation and pleasure.

"Now," said madame, "we never hear a single note. Do, my child, sing for me this evening."

"Do not ask me, dear mamma," said Claudia; 'I really dare not.'

"You dare not! What can you mean?" asked the mother.

"I mean," was the reply, "that Roland never allowed me to sing before his foreign friends, in case they should discover that I had been a professional singer. I conclude he would be equally averse to it here."

But Madame Francini, accustomed as she was to his whims and inconsistencies, naturally imagined that the prohibition could not extend to them when alone; so she repeated her request still more urgently. Claudia at last consented, and timidly at first tried one of her mother's favourite songs, then another with more confidence, till with the renewed enjoyment of the music she loved, her voice resumed its old power, and she was singing as exquisitely as ever, when the glass doors from the terrace were violently burst open, and Roland, trembling with passion, stood before them. 'What do you mean, Claudia,' he raved, 'by presuming to sing against my wishes? The servants all listening and gaping round the house. Do you think the greatest fool among them can mistake your professional style?' Saying which, he pushed her, unprepared as she was, from the music-stool; and she fell heavily to the ground.

Her mother rushed to her side as she lay there a lifeless heap, and found that she had fainted. In her terror she branded him with having killed her child. He appeared frightened; and taking his young wife in his strong arms, without an effort he placed her upon a sofa, while her distracted mother rang for assistance, and made use of such means as were at hand for the restoration of the unconscious girl.

On the arrival of the doctor she was carried up to the bed which was well-nigh that of death, and from which she did not rise for many weeks after her little girl was born. Madame Francini hoped on that occasion to awaken the newly made father to something like tenderness; but his only reply to news which, under the circumstances, might have touched a heart of stone, was that he would have thanked her for her information had the child been a son.

After Claudia's recovery, Roland's conduct became more reckless than ever, and worse than all, he made no secret of hating the child. As it was delicate at first, he was asked a few hours after its birth by what name he would have it baptised. 'Anything, as long as it is decidedly English,' was his answer—thus prohibiting the name of Claudia.

Madame Francini knew that it would gratify her daughter to name the infant after herself; it was therefore christened Beatrice Lascelles. To this little creature Claudia attached herself with more than a mother's ordinary love. Aware of her husband's feelings towards the child, she scarcely allowed it out of her sight. This great anxiety, the undefined dread which possessed her, added to his violence, and to grosser acts which I will not pain the reader by mentioning, were at last too much for nerves and health so cruelly enfeebled; and it was quite evident that nothing short of being placed legally and completely out of her husband's power, would save Claudia. The doctors talked of incipient consumption, and recommended the south of France; but only those who knew the truth, knew also the remedy. Not to fatigue the reader with unnecessary details, I will shortly state that the solicitor I employed wrote to Roland on the subject. I soon received the following lines from him:

DEAR BURGOGNE—I am sorry to find that you are mixed up in this most unpleasant affair. You will say that I ought to have followed your advice.

You disapproved of my foolish marriage from the first; and my best neighbour and old friend Lord Loftus has cut me, because I did not marry his daughter. The fact is Lady Barbara and I were all but engaged; I may say it was quite an understood thing in the family; so I have lost his friendship, worse still, his parliamentary influence as well, by my folly. Of course I shall not attempt a defence.—Yours as ever,

ROLAND MORNINGTON.

A decree for the divorce was pronounced. Ah, why did my every nerve quiver, my every pulse beat with tumultuous emotion when I knew that Claudia was free! True, she was no longer a wife; but to her pure mind that kind of freedom did not signify the enfranchisement which would permit her to seek happiness in the love of another; nor would my own principles, I trust, have allowed me to offer it under the circumstances in which she was now placed. Then why should the words 'Claudia is free,' in spite of my earnest endeavours to banish them from my mind, haunt me like the refrain of a song? I know not; I can only state the fact.

I was to see her once more only before she left England. It was arranged that she with her mother and child were to start for the south of France almost immediately; the precise locality only remained to be chosen.

I dare not trust myself to describe that last interview. Claudia looked more like some beautiful marble statue of her former self, than the bright original, excepting when her eyes rested upon her child; then a tender smile would steal over the passionless stillness of her features. It was evidently her one earthly consolation. I offered up a silent prayer that it might be spared to her; for I saw that in the separation from that blossom, the fragile parent flower would follow.

Soon a long and most interesting letter from Madame Francini told me of their arrival at Villa Franca, of their picturesque and pleasant residence there, and of her daughter's improved health and spirits. The little one promised to be a second Claudia—and was well and happy. Two or three other letters followed, all containing the same satisfactory account. 'The life here,' wrote Madame Francini, 'is one of perfect peace. It is this peace which is, more than all the lovely scenery or the pure air, restoring to me my beloved child.'

Then came a long silence. I had written last, and felt vexed with Madame Francini for disappointing me. With my feelings towards Claudia, I would not have drawn Claudia herself into a correspondence with me for the world. So again I wrote to her mother expressing my anxiety. Her answer told me that I had indeed cause for it. Evidently written in great agitation, it began abruptly with these words: 'He is here!' The writer went on to state that Roland had first made his appearance at church the previous Sunday. As he never used to enter one, it could only be to throw himself in their way. Claudia nearly fainted at the sight of him. The next day he had discovered their peaceful abode, for he was seen near the house several times. Already Claudia had determined to give up her pleasant rambles with her child, and would not allow it to be taken out of the house without her. 'All our peace is at

an end,' wrote the unhappy lady. 'Claudia is excited and restless; her eyes have already acquired the startled expression, her cheek the vivid flush which before filled me with apprehension. Pray, write, and advise us if you can.'

I was terribly vexed and indignant. What counsel could I give? It was quite clear that Roland could not be compelled to leave the place. It was open to all who chose to go. The only hope was that he would soon tire of so quiet a spot. Formerly, he would not have endured it for a week. He had already been there longer. His design might be merely to annoy. But it was more probable that he had some ulterior motive for selecting it, as when a second week had nearly passed he still remained, while the little family at the villa still feared to venture beyond the garden, which fortunately was of sufficient extent to afford them daily exercise.

My advice was, that should Roland continue by his presence to keep them prisoners, they should make arrangements for leaving the place as soon as they conveniently could, even if they went for a time to a less agreeable locality. I thought he would scarcely so far disregard that proof of their wish to avoid him, as to follow them.

After this came another long silence. I forbore to write, as I thought they might possibly have been compelled to leave their residence on the coast. Still Madame Francini might write; though she could never guess the deep devoted interest I took in all that concerned her daughter. I knew not what construction to put upon her strange silence. At last my doubts were solved. A letter in Madame Francini's well-known hand was before me. I tore it open as if some presentiment of evil possessed me; but not for one moment did I imagine of what nature. These words informed me: '*Claudia and her husband are once more reconciled!*'

The letter dropped from my nerveless hands. For some moments, during which my brain seemed to be all but paralysed, I was unable to read it. At length I locked my door from all intruders, and nerved myself for the bitter task. The letter filled many pages, and might have been written with tears, so freely they had flowed from the eyes of her who wrote them. Here however, I can only give an epitome of the unhappy mother's pathetic account.

When the two ladies had remained resolutely confined to the house or garden for a fortnight, Claudia received a letter from Roland, which threw her into violent agitation. At first she would not open it; but the desire to know his motive for following her, induced her to do so. The letter breathed the deepest repentance, and the writer implored her to answer it, if even to tell him that it was of no avail. She thought it prudent to refrain from entering into a correspondence. But another letter from him more urgent than the first caused her to waver. She would have told him he was forgiven—as no doubt he was by that sweet saint—but for her mother's wise counsel. Then came a third still more penitent letter, imploring his 'once loving Claudia' to grant him a sight of the child. Surely that was a favour a father might reasonably ask even of the woman who had so much to forgive.

This quite broke down the young mother's reso-

lution. The daily walks should be renewed, which, after all, she thought necessary for her child's health; and the father should look upon her darling. Claudia asked her mother to accompany her to the trysting-place, for so it might be called; but Madame Francini declined to countenance the meeting in any way; so Claudia, wayward for the first time in her life, set out with the little girl and her nurse to meet him, who with all his sins against her, had been the husband of her youth. The interview was short, but had evidently made a deep impression upon Claudia. On her return, she told her mother that she was now convinced of the sincerity of his repentance—that he was in ecstasies with the beauty of their little daughter; and that he had by the tenderness which the sight of the child had awakened in him, made her feel as if she had been too hasty, in fact almost wicked in insisting upon a divorce!

Poor Madame Francini heard all this with dismay. She was a sincerely religious woman, and could not bring herself to trust one who had no faith. She dwelt upon this point most earnestly with her daughter; but in vain. Roland had resumed much of his old power over her, and her heart was filled with self-reproach for what she termed her desertion.

After this meeting, Madame Francini decided to accompany her daughter in her walks, in the hope that the man she dreaded would not venture to molest them in her presence. At such times he would bow with the utmost respect to the ladies, and never failed to caress the child. From these walks, which used to bring back the glow of health to the cheek of the invalid, Claudia now returned feverish and unhappy. Her peace was at an end. The crisis was at hand. One morning, when Madame Francini had gone to early service as usual, Claudia was at home alone preparing breakfast. She heard the garden-gate swing to, and thinking it could only be her mother—though considerably earlier than usual—returned from church, she ran to open the door for her. The surprise was almost too much for her when she beheld Roland; and in her agitation she would have fallen but for his supporting arms. He had doubtless called to his aid all his subtle power of fascination; for when Madame Francini returned—her entrance being unobserved—he was kneeling before Claudia, calling her by every endearing name and imploring her forgiveness. Quite unabashed, he turned to her mother, and entreated her to speak for him; but she indignantly reproved him for his intrusion; and while he poured forth the most vehement protestations of repentant sorrow for the past, she heard him with increased distrust; Claudia alas! with that pity which too surely was fast melting into rekindled love.

The distressing letter concluded with these heart-rending words: 'I have reasoned with my child; I have used every argument I can think of; but all alas! in vain! In all probability, by the time you receive this, Roland Mornington and Claudia will again be solemnly betrothed.'

The mother's fears were realised. The daughter's heart, full of divine compassion, returned to its first love, and in less than a month from the date of Madame Francini's foregoing letter I received the fatal news of their re-marriage. Yes! at the

end of one year from the date of the divorce, Roland and Claudia were again man and wife.

'They were reunited at the little church,' wrote Madame Francini, 'which my poor child and I have attended ever since we came here. The good priest who has been so valuable a friend to us became also the friend of Roland; his mission being one of peace, his creed against divorce, no wonder he took the part of the repentant husband. God grant he may be right. But he saw not as I saw, the sinister smile of triumph which curled Roland's lip at the very altar; he heard not the tone in which he said to me: "I know, madame, I have your good wishes. Believe me, they are reciprocal!"' Claudia looked as confidently happy as on the morning when she first became a wife. Her tears only began to flow when she took leave of her little girl. "Only for a few days, my darling!" she murmured as she fondly pressed the child to her heart; then kissing me affectionately, said: "I know I need not ask my dearest mother to take care of her till we meet again, for the sake of her Claudia!"'

It was arranged that the re-married pair should go to Montpellier for a week, during which time Madame Francini was to prepare for returning to England with them. She was comforted with one happy letter from her daughter. 'Have no fears for me, dearest mamma,' she wrote, after announcing their arrival at their destination. 'Roland loves me more devotedly than ever. But a few days more, and then I shall be with all I love in the world! Happy as I am now, I long to be again with you and my precious little Beatrice.'

The mother's heart was somewhat more at rest. She occupied herself in preparations for their return to Villa Franca and their subsequent departure for England. Her little charge was becoming daily more interesting, so that the days appeared to glide swiftly past, till the morning fixed for their meeting. It brought a letter, which to Madame Francini's intense surprise and disappointment was superscribed Mornington! It was but a few lines from Claudia to say that letters from England requiring Roland's immediate presence there, had obliged them to start by the first packet from Dieppe; not even giving her time to write before their departure; that she would again write when they were settled, to arrange for her mother and child to join them there.

AFGHANISTAN AND ITS PEOPLE.

AFGHANISTAN, which we hear so much about, is looked upon as the north-west 'gate of India,' and consists of two large districts or provinces, named respectively Cabul and Khorassan; the former being a mountainous region situated north of Ghuzni and the Sufed Koh or White Mountains, and bounded on the east and west by the Indus, and the expanse of country known as the Hazara; while the latter extends on the north to Hazara and Ghor, and on the south to Beloochistan, with the Suliman range on the east, and Persia on the west.

The scenery in Cabul, which is the chief seat of the Ameer of Afghanistan—Shere Ali Khan—is very grand, and consists mainly of lofty snow-

capped mountains, the lower portions of which are covered with pine-forests, while the vales and glens are enriched with luxuriant foliage, and watered by numerous mountain streams. Khorassan or the Land of the Sun is on the other hand almost the opposite of Cabul, for its principal features are long low ranges of rocky hills and elevated plateaus of sand and gravel; and while the summer in Cabul is rendered mild and bearable by the cool breezes wafted down to its plains from the mountains, Khorassan has to bear the full blaze of the fierce Indian sun.

In the Mohammedan cemetery on the south-east of the city of Cabul is a tombstone with the following epitaph: 'Here lyeth the body of JOHN HICKS, son of Thomas and Edith Hicks, who departed this life 11th October 1666.' Perhaps some of our readers can inform us as to who John Hicks was, and what took him to Cabul in the days when Aurungzebe was Mogul of India, and Charles II. king of England.

The population of Afghanistan is composed of a variety of races or tribes, amongst whom are the Bozdars, the Kutrans, the Kasraanees, the Murrees, the Cutchees, and the Bugtees, beside the wild and cruel Jajis who haunt the Khyber Pass and its neighbourhood. The dominant race in Khorassan is undoubtedly the Brahoe, which is supposed by some authorities to have come from Abyssinia, while others maintain that the tribes are of Mongol extraction. The term Belooch (for these tribes are also known as the Beloochees—Beloochistan being the original name of Khorassan), or *Bilush* as it is written by the Persian scribes, is, according to Professor Rawlinson, derived from Belus king of Babylonia, the Nimrod of Scripture.

The government of each tribe is a most complete democracy, split up into as many factions as there are families. Each section of a tribe has its own quarrels and supports its own chief, whose tenure of authority is often of the most precarious nature, being raised to power one day to be overthrown the next. There are also blood-feuds of long standing between them, so that village is divided against village and house against house. It was to one of these terrible feuds that the late Lord Mayo owed his sad death; the man who assassinated him having been sentenced to penal servitude for life for killing another with whom he had a feud. He had once been servant to the Viceroy, and thought that he should have pardoned him.

The most numerous and important race are the Afghans proper, whose form of government and general customs resemble all other Mohammedan nations, and who, while proud of their Islamism, do not hesitate to break all its laws whenever their love of fighting, thieving, and debauchery makes it incumbent on them to do so. The absence from their midst of honour and patriotism is very remarkable; indeed they are a bigoted and treacherous race, stained by indescribable debauchery, and degraded to the lowest depths of infamy and corruption.

In spite of their debauched lives, it is remarkable to find that the Afghans and Beloochees are physically fine races, tall, robust, well-formed, and active. The former especially have extremely handsome faces; and the beauty of their women

has been noticed by all our travellers. The Afghans are great sportsmen, hunting and hawking being their favourite pastime, while in marksmanship and horsemanship they cannot be excelled. Strange to say, chess is one of their amusements; but what they most like is to lie and listen to stories of the *Arabian Nights* style, though more interminable, and always of a more or less corrupt nature.

The females enhance their beauty by all the artifices so well known to the eastern peoples; and their hair, worn in long plaits, is often adorned with ornaments of a rough yet withal of an effective character, composed of metal or glass. The women of the higher classes are however, kept in strict seclusion, and nobody is permitted to enter the harems, where they pass the greater part of their lives.

Perhaps the most lawless of all the Afghan tribes is the frontier tribe, the Waziris, who are born warriors, and splendid horsemen. It was these men who lately lined the sides and summits of the mountains in the Khyber Pass for the purpose of preventing the passage of our friendly mission and its escort. The head-men of the Waziris are, it appears, now periodically summoned to Cabul, whence they return bearing handsome presents from the Ameer. The members of the tribe are however, an astute set of fellows; and it is not at all improbable that they may eventually desert Shere Ali in spite of his presents, in order to accept regular pay from the Indian government. For though essentially fighting-men, the Waziris are fond of money, and are not only dreaded by their neighbours for their ferocious bravery, but are likewise envied for their wealth. They possess a famous breed of horses, which they have managed very cleverly to keep to themselves. These horses are distinguished by a peculiar curve and twist of the ear, and are remarkable for their wiry hardy frame and high temper. The tradition is that the Waziris stole the royal progenitors of their studs from the stables of the Persian Nadir Shah when he invaded India; but the Waziris themselves assert that the Conqueror bestowed the precious animals upon their ancestors as a mark of his admiration of their brilliant horsemanship.

They never shoe their steeds, but ride them bare-hoofed, and even at times bare-backed, up and down the dangerous mountain passes, as if they were veritable centaurs; and so highly do they prize their exclusive possession of the breed, that they will never sell a mare, though a market is held periodically at Thul for the sale of horses.

In some parts of the country so thievish are the propensities of the inhabitants, that while one man ploughs in a field another stands on the watch, rifle in hand. Indeed the Toris of Boghzaï, a large hamlet situated near Saddah, are all thieves; and when a male child is born, the baptismal ceremony consists in putting the infant burglar through a hole in the wall, while his relatives exhort him to be a thief 'heart and hand' as his father and grandfather were before him. A marline-spike, used for breaking holes through the mud walls of neighbours' houses, is part of the regular furniture of a Tori house, and is looked upon as a household chattel, especially in the home of a young couple about to make a start in life.

On the other side of the hill, or mountain, where these people dwell, exists a tribe called the Jajis; and the two tribes nourish such a hatred of each other that no member of either party dares to cross the barrier which thus separates them. These Jajis live in square structures of stone and mud erected on log platforms and profusely loop-holed. The entrance is from beneath by a trap-door and rope-ladder, which is drawn up when the inmate is housed. When neighbouring families are at feud, they keep such a strict watch on each other's movements that they are often confined to their 'shooting-boxes' for weeks together.

The Jajis are perfect savages in their habits and customs, and when they are pursued, they leap from rock to rock like a lot of monkeys, so that there is no possibility of punishing them for any act of savagery that they may have committed. When they are thoroughly aroused, they dance about the sides and summits of the hills, yelling fearfully, and brandishing wildly their terrible Afghan knives. Chanting a war-song as an accompaniment to pipes and drums, they endeavour to terrify an enemy to the utmost extent previous to attacking him. It is an astounding fact, however, that although they are deaf to every other appeal which may be made to them, they instantly submit to listen to one based upon their 'honour!' Savage and lawless as they are, they yet deem themselves the possessors of 'honour,' and an appeal based upon their honour as Afghan gentlemen is simply irresistible. Surely this is a remarkable psychological fact, and one that is worth inquiring into by students in the science of ethnology.

These then are the people with whom our troops will have to deal should England unfortunately be engaged in another war with Afghanistan; but the tribes are not all necessarily hostile to us. Though nominally owing allegiance to Shere Ali Khan, the Afghans, and especially the frontier tribes, are ever ready to sell their swords to the highest bidder; although perchance on this occasion the ruler of Afghanistan may have already made doubly sure their allegiance to him.

Afghanistan and British India are divided by a mountainous range, which reaches in some cases to an elevation of eighteen thousand feet, and which not only serves for a screen through which a secretly collected army could dash upon an unsuspecting foe, but also consists of a broad tract of mountainous land, inhospitable to the last degree, and inhabited, as we have already seen, by numerous savage and utterly lawless tribes. It is pierced by several passes, the most famous of which is the Kyber, or Khyber, of evil memory, near which, in 1839, a large English force was literally cut to pieces, one man alone escaping to Jelalabad to tell the lamentable story. There are now about seventeen well-defined roads practicable for the movements of lightly equipped columns, and four along which guns could be taken. These are annually traversed by Afghan merchants who bring the produce of Central Asia into Hindustan and take back English wares in exchange.

The great drawback to these roads being used in the time of war is, that our own means of communication with them are of the worst description, and would present as many difficulties to an expeditionary force moving within our own borders as it would find in the mountains them-

selves. Hence it will be necessary that the Khyber and Bolan passes should again be chosen as the routes by which the invading army must enter Afghanistan.

THE IRISH WIDOW.

A TALE OF CIRCUMSTANTIAL EVIDENCE.

IN FOUR CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER I.—ANTECEDENTS.

A SHORT time after one of those unhappy outbreaks which seem periodically to take place in Ireland, two members of the police force were sent down from the dépôt in Dublin to be stationed at the small village of Mullaghboy, near Dundalk in the county of Louth. One of them was the man who records this history; the other, his constant friend sub-constable Michael O'Dowd. Having but recently joined the ranks of the Irish constabulary, promotion was the ardent desire of us both; it occupied our thoughts the livelong day, and got mixed up with our dreams at night. But Mullaghboy was a very unsuitable district for such two enterprising members of the force. The opportunities it afforded for crime were ridiculously rare—one public-house, a market every Tuesday, and a fair four times in the year. Against such disadvantages we struggled untiringly during the space of two years, without gaining a single smile from hard-hearted Fortune. On one occasion it was announced that the magistrate's greatcoat had been stolen out of his hall, and I was the man who spent a whole fortnight in a painstaking investigation of the theft. It was, I confess, an unsatisfactory termination of my search to find that the greatcoat had in point of fact never left the magisterial residence at all, but had through mistake been put away in a wardrobe by one of the servants, who had left a short time before the hue-and-cry was raised. However, the process by which I led up to that discovery was quite beautiful, as all the barracks allowed. I bitterly felt the disappointment consequent on my failing to establish a case of burglary, which would certainly have insured for me the long-wished-for stripe.

Since that time I was familiarly known as Detective Dick. I gloried in the title, and was determined to establish my claim to it on a still more secure basis. A fire broke out in a farmhouse. O'Dowd and myself were the first on the spot, and strained every effort to establish out of it a case of malicious burning, and get the damages charged on the adjacent townlands; but the old couple who lived on the premises obstinately persisted in alleging it to be their own fault. Once too a wedding took place in the village, wherein the bride and bridegroom represented the two factions of importance. When the bride's treat came off at the public-house, there were reasonable hopes of a row; but though we kept out of the way most carefully, nothing came of it, and the party broke up in quite an amicable fashion.

We had come down to Mullaghboy at a very bad juncture. As often happens in Ireland, a

profound calm had succeeded a stormy season of political agitation. The people seemed bent on giving us no trouble, as if through spite. And yet we were in the very district where two murders of a dreadful character had been committed, for which sixteen men were committed and one hanged. But through the general gloom shone one ray of hope. Jemmy Lawless was a man whose vagaries pleasingly contrasted with the all-pervading quiet. He and his wife represented the lowest stratum of society in the place. They kept up no style, and lived a sort of Bohemian existence. O'Dowd and I had our eyes on them ever since we came down to that unfortunate neighbourhood. They were wily; so much so, that the only chances they ever gave us were when they came back tipsy from neighbouring fairs, or of a Saturday night, when they went down as a matter of course to the public-house. On such occasions we would descend with dignity and haul off both of them to barracks. Their mode of making a livelihood was precarious. A stranger, judging from the variety of trades in which they embarked, would conclude that they were hard struggling folks. But we knew them to be notorious thieves, and that their various trades were only a make-believe to blind the country-people. Lawless himself bought up decrepit old horses, whose hides and bones he used to sell to the dealers. He caught and trained singing-birds in the season. He made baskets, besoms, and beescaps. He sold greyhounds and terriers; in fact any kind of dog you might want, even though he should have to go ten miles off to steal it for you. His wife dealt in knitted socks, dandelion, apples, sweet-stuff, and the like necessities and luxuries of life. In fact they were employed in anything or everything except honest industry, and were designated as regular 'characters,' though character they had none.

But as I said before, O'Dowd and I had our eye on them, and they could hardly turn for us. They lived a considerable distance out of the village, but were nearly always in it, hankering after a rich old relative of theirs named Peggy Malone. Peggy was a widow without any children, and pursued the lawful calling of a pedler. She was reputed to be very rich. Report said she had a stocking full of sovereigns hid in the thatch of her lonely cottage. In business she was quite indefatigable, despite her years; she had every day of the week except Sunday, occupied. Thus of a Monday she would go to Dundalk market, a distance of eight miles; having to rise for that purpose before the break of day. Of a Tuesday it would be her native Mullaghboy; of a Wednesday, Carrickmore; and so on to the end of the week. She used to carry about with her the money, oftentimes a respectable sum, which she realised at these markets. She was always averse to the advances of the Lawless family, and had come to an open rupture with them a short time before the deed of blood which I am about to record, took place.

CHAPTER II.—CIRCUMSTANTIAL EVIDENCE.

One Monday evening late in December, O'Dowd and I were seated at opposite sides of the kitchen-fire in Mullaghboy barracks, waiting for the hour of ten, when we should go out on patrol along the

Dundalk Road. Seated on a chair between us, an old dissipated tinker named Walsh, whom we had picked up in the afternoon out of a ditch, was sleeping away his debauch. We found the poor soul in a drenched and helpless condition, and not having the heart to put him in the lock-up at once, allowed him to stay at the warm kitchen-fire. Soon the heat and thirst roused him from his torpor. Addressing me by the name of Lawless, he asked for a glass of something. I told him that he was in the barracks—a fact indeed which he ought to have known, for it was not his first appearance there—and threatened to lock him up if he were not quiet. He calmed down considerably, and asked me if Lawless had been arrested too. On receiving an answer in the negative, he muttered his annoyance, and informed us that Lawless was a rascal well worth watching, always up to some blackguard game or another, &c.

O'Dowd winked at me across the hearth to draw out Walsh more fully on this topic. As I considered myself pretty skilful at a cross-examination—I used to watch Mr Macwheelder the attorney at petty sessions—I proceeded at once to business.

'How did it come about at all, man, that we found you lying in that shocking puddle?' I asked.

'Begorra sir, I'll tell you that same,' said he. 'You see I done a good stroke of work all through the counthry last week an' made a pot of money. On Sathurday evenin' I got into this town an' kem across Lawless down at the public-house—worse luck! We fell to the dhrinkin' from that on, an' sorra a wan of us sturred till the last copper was spint.'

'Is Lawless so strong in cash as all that?'

'Lawless sthrong in cash, did you say sir? Why, that fellow hasn't a brass farden to bless himself wid! It was me own money he was dhrinkin'.'

'But is not Mrs Malone doing something for him?'

'Och sir, shure you must have heerd how she chased him an' the wife last week; an' you know that them as waits for dead min's shoes must go a long while barefuttled. An' be the same token, I wouldn't like to be in ould Peggy Malone's shoes this minit; for Lawless is very hard on her. He tells me that if he can't get a share of the stockin' be fair manes, some other folks 'ill be takin' it from her be foul; an' I knqw what he manes be that. Be me faith, I wouldn't put it past the same bhoy to give her an' her cart a cownp [overset] some one of these fine nights'—

'Take care of what you are about,' interrupted, 'for what you have just said might be twisted into a libel.'

'A lie, did you say? I'd take me davy that he'd do it if he got the chance. An' the blaggard rascal was wantin' money this mornin' from me to do a stroke of bizzness, be your lave. Well thin, to make a long story short, I was lavin' him a bit of the road home this evenin', an' the thirist came on us very bad, an' I tuk a bottle out of me pocket, an' we sat down on the mortal spot an' finished it. An' thin I suppose I fell asleep, an' he hooked it away; an' you found me lyin' in the ditch; an' here I am wid sorra as much as would jingle on a tombstone.' As he spoke, he pulled

out the lining of his pockets and displayed—emptiness.

Ten o'clock struck, and at the same moment the sergeant of the barracks entering ordered us out for patrol. Having equipped ourselves with our accoutrements, we went out together through the deserted streets of the village and along the Dundalk Road. Peggy Malone's house was the last we had to pass in making our exit, and the recent conversation directed my attention towards it. I could see that she had not yet returned from Dundalk market: there was no light in the window, nor was her cart in its usual place in front of the door. I directed O'Dowd's attention to the fact. He thought it very strange indeed, as she had never, to his knowledge, been out so late before; and to-morrow would be the market-day in the village. He thought it probable however, that we would meet her somewhere on the road. The night was fine, though rain had fallen during the day, and the full moon shone at intervals through rifts in the clouds. We advanced at a leisurely pace, discussing constabulary matters in general and the freaks of Lawless in particular. At length we found ourselves at the end of our beat without observing any trace of Peggy or her cart. A simultaneous impulse urged us to continue our walk about half a mile beyond our accustomed limits. This brought us to a sequestered part of the road, where it ran through a deep glen for some distance, closed in on both sides and overarched by dense trees; a haunt vocal with crows in the daytime, but terrible in its stillness once night came on. The associations connected with the spot were none of the pleasantest, for a land-agent and his bailiff had been murdered there three years before. Altogether it was a very undesirable spot at about eleven o'clock of a dark night in the month of December.

When we reached the entrance of the glen, we paused to listen for the wheels of Peggy's vehicle, and thought at first we could discern the rumbling of a cart on the hill at the other side of the valley; but it was apparently going in the opposite direction, as the sound became fainter and fainter by degrees, and at length ceased altogether. However, we resolved to go to the end of the glen at least, to see if all was right, and then turn homewards. We had proceeded a few paces further alongside the wood, keeping eyes and ears on the alert, when suddenly I heard O'Dowd utter an exclamation. Just then the moon came out from behind a dark cloud. Turning round, I observed O'Dowd, who had halted, stooping down in an attitude of horror towards some dark object on the roadside. I ran over, and in the clear moonlight I could see that it was a pool of blood! It was evident, from the disturbed condition of the mud and stones, that a considerable struggle must have taken place there. The body whose life-blood had been drained away was not to be found; but there were the tracks of a horse, of a cart, and of a human being. Those of the horse were very irregular, facing every direction, and tearing up the ground, just as if the animal had been turned round sharply or made to back against his will. Those left by the cart-wheels pointed to the former supposition, indicating as they did that the vehicle had come up to the spot from the direction of Dundalk, wheeled right about and gone back by the way it came.

'It must have been Peggy Malone's cart!' exclaimed O'Dowd excitedly.

I made him no answer, for I was now proceeding to examine the human foot-prints. In my eagerness I knelt down on the wet road and with the aid of a lighted match scrutinised them closely. I could see that they had been left by a man wearing hobnailed shoes, and also that each right foot-print had a deep indentation in the centre, from which I concluded—rightly as it turned out—that the wearer must have had a frost-nail in the centre of his right shoe. Country folks about used such nails to prevent themselves from slipping in frosty weather.

While I was making these important and interesting observations, O'Dowd had been searching the low hedges that bordered the road on both sides for traces of the victim. In this however, he failed; but nearly opposite to where the occurrence took place, he came upon an old clay-pipe lying on the grass beside the ditch. It bore a strong resemblance to the *dhudeen* which Lawless used to smoke, being short in the stem and begrimed with constant use. We failed to discover anything else in the vicinity calculated to throw light on the mysterious business, though we continued our investigations for a considerable time longer. The conclusions at which we arrived accorded in almost every respect. Lawless had parted from the tinker that evening, after having primed himself for the deed with liquor at the tinker's expense. He had come down to this lowly spot, thinking that it was most suitable for his villainous purpose, both from its seclusion and from the fact that our patrol never by any chance extended to within half a mile of it. Most probably he had been smoking his pipe at the adjacent hedge to while away the time until the unsuspecting Peggy should make her appearance. Then on hearing her approach down the hill at the other end of the valley, he had forgotten in his excitement to put the pipe into his pocket. When the cart came up to his place of concealment, he had started out, surprised the defenceless woman, and the deed was done. He must have come upon her unawares before she could leave her cart. The absence of foot-prints other than those of the assassin pointed to that conclusion. The distant lumbering of wheels which we had heard on entering the grove must have been none other than the noise of the cart containing the murderer, his unfortunate victim, and the wealth that had instigated him to the dastardly crime.

CHAPTER III.—CORROBORATIVE EVIDENCE.

We saw that no time was to be lost, as everything depended on our promptness. Thus the chances of the assassin's escape would be lessened; besides, who knew but that some luckier member of the force might cross the scent ahead of us and succeed in bagging our own lawful game! We held a council of war on the spot, and concluded to return with all speed to the village, report progress at the barracks, and obtain a search-warrant to overhaul Lawless's quarters. We soon got back to the village, where, after a little delay, we succeeded in obtaining the warrant, and also the one available man left in the barracks as a reinforcement; the rest having been ordered away the day previous to another part of the

country on some rioting business. With great promptness we ordered out the only car in the village, jumped on it, and in quick time reached the entrance to the lane that led up to Lawless's hovel. This lane left the Dundalk Road on the right-hand side at a short distance beyond the scene described, and was extremely narrow and dangerous. Farther advance on the vehicle was not to be thought of; so we counselled the driver to wait where he was, at the entrance of the lane, till we came back; a thing which he was exceedingly loath to do. Then we pressed forward on foot.

We soon found ourselves floundering through a marshy moor, where at every step we stumbled against some projecting stone or clump of heather or plunged into a pool of bog-water. To add to our misery, a dense drizzling rain began to fall, and the darkness hardly allowed us to see objects five yards ahead. In the pursuit of fame other men have been known to wade through fire; we were wading through bog-holes. It was a tiresome business, yet we held on gallantly till we arrived within a short distance of the place where the house should be. Here we halted and divided our forces. We knew the Lawless family residence of old; how well it was provided against such sudden invasions. It was a mere cabin, with a small door and window in front, while in the rear, another door opened out upon a moorland district. Many a time had the wily Lawless given the Royal Irish the slip; for whilst they were haughtily demanding entrance in the name of the law at the front door, Lawless would be making his exit through the door at the back, and get clear off into the mountains. Thus his arrest or the detection of stolen goods was rendered very difficult indeed. Now however, under my directions, O'Dowd, our reinforcement, and myself arrived simultaneously at the front door, back door, and window. I knew Lawless to be a powerful determined fellow, not likely to surrender his liberty without an effort; so I screwed up the courage in my heart and the bayonet on my gun, resolved to secure my man or die in the attempt. All the dispositions having been satisfactorily made, I knocked, and demanded entrance in the usual form. At first, no response. All was as silent as the grave. During the few brief moments that ensued, I could almost hear my heart beat with nervous throbbings; for we policemen are only men after all. Then I knocked again; and this time heard a slight bustling noise inside. A low voice, that of Lawless's wife, asked who was there. I told her my name and mission, and that all resistance was useless, as we should have to break the door open in case she refused to admit us. The bar was immediately drawn back. I gave instructions to the reinforcement to follow me up closely, and entered boldly. The old woman at my direction struck a light, and revealed herself in—well, undress. I undid the bolt of the back door and admitted the dauntless O'Dowd. Then I searched the place from top to bottom, O'Dowd and the reinforcement keeping guard meanwhile at each door, to prevent an attempt at escape. But such precautions were useless; for after half an hour spent in a most painstaking investigation, I failed to discover any trace of Lawless, or anything which would lead us to believe that he had been in the house recently. During my search, the woman looked on in sullen silence.

At its conclusion I put the question to her point-blank: 'Where is your husband to-night, Mrs Lawless?'

'Well thin,' she answered in a tone of vexation, 'I'm thinkin' it's meself ought to be axin' you that same, seein' as how you kape a closer eye upon him than any one I know of.'

'At anyrate, Mrs Lawless, you know that we policemen must do our duty; and by all accounts, he's not giving yourself the best of fair-play.'

'Well, I suppose that's a matther betune me an' him. An' if he does go about the country squandherin' an' battherin', it's not at your expinse anyhow.'

'Surely,' said I, pretending to be in noway anxious; 'but we want him down at the barracks about a little bit of business that he had a hand in. But never mind blaming us, who wouldn't allow a hair of your head to be touched. And this I will say, that it's the wonder of the whole country how you bear up with him, driving himself and your own respectable family to ruin.'

'In troth sir, that's thrue for you,' she replied, somewhat softened. 'An' it was an onlucky day whin I, a daycent Malone, tuk the notion of comin' in among the dhirty Lawlesses, the thievin' pack! But shure, I was young an' innocent thin,' she added after a pause.

'There's no use in telling us what we know, Mrs Lawless, and that can't be helped now. It's time for us to be bidding you good-night ma'am; and sorry we are for having had to disturb you.—By the way, here's a pipe that I think belongs to you: we found it outside.'

'No sir; it's not mine; it's Jack's; for it was him put that mark on the bowl wid his knife.'

'Well, in that case ma'am,' said I, smiling, 'I had better keep it till I see himself to-morrow. But if he ever gives you any trouble, just slip down to Mr O'Dowd and me, and I'll engage that you won't have to complain a second time.'

'Thank ye kindly for that same,' she replied; 'and I wish ye good-night an' safe home.'

'Talking about getting safe home, Mrs Lawless,' said O'Dowd; 'you haven't got the best avenue in the world for visitors on a dark night; and the rain has not improved it. I was hoping that the weather was beginning to harden when I saw last Thursday's frost.'

'Frost never lasts no time in December,' replied the unsuspecting lady.

'When I saw the people bringing their horses to the forge to get them sharpened,' said I, 'the idea struck me that they were only throwing away their time and money.'

'Well, jist think o' that now!' she broke in with admiration. 'I med the identical same remark to Lawless on Thursday, as he was sittin' in that corner there hammerin' a frost-nail into his brogue. But what I says is, Live an' learn.'

We failed to get anything further of importance out of the old dame, though she seemed to be in a very good frame of mind for affording information; so we took our leave with expressions of good-will on both sides.

The rain was still falling when we quitted the hovel. Our passage back was if possible fraught with increased discomfort and difficulty, owing to the completely saturated state of the ground. At length we emerged upon the high-road,

dripping from head to foot, but still not disheartened.

During our absence the carman had had his own share of vexation. It had rained on him continuously ever since; and the care of his horse had prevented him from seeking a more adequate shelter than that afforded by the neighbouring thorn-hedge. At the sound of our footsteps he came out of his retreat, and glad he was to see us back again.

'Tare an' ounds, min,' said he, 'but I was jist thinkin' I'd never clap eyes on you agin, a scourin' the whole blissed counthry of a night like this. Faix, an' it's meself that's well plaised that you haven't come into any harum; for atune oursels, I wouldn't jist like to be turnin' me daycent car into a hearse.' He was quite reeking with wet, much worse than any one of ourselves, and shook all over as if in an ague fit.

Whilst O'Dowd and I were resolving on the next move, our companion constable went up to him in a sympathising way. 'Is your coat very wet, Larry?' said he.

'Be the tarlins, sir, the coat surrindhered to the rain ages ago; but the shirt is houldin' out grand. It's caulkin' up the pores in me skin so cliver, that divil resave the dhrop of wet 'ud reach me bones till the morrow mornin'.'

Before the constable had time to reply, I turned round to the carman and asked: 'Did you see any person or persons pass by from the Dundalk direction, while you were waiting for us?'

'Not a livin' sowl, barrin' Pat Murphy, that's sarvint-bhoy to Mr O'Connor down at the Glen Mills there. An' savin' yer presence, I wish I was as near the kiln-fire as I expect he is this minit.'

O'Dowd here remarked to me: 'The night is young still. I think that the best course we can take is to drop down to the mills and see if the people there know anything, or if Murphy met any one to-night on his road home from Dundalk.'

I jumped at the suggestion, and reminded O'Dowd of the fact that the Glen Mills were the nearest human habitation to the scene of the catastrophe. The rain was now falling in torrents; the state of our clothes—it could not be worse. Our reinforcement, who was a raw recruit, and who doubtless was wishing himself back again in his native depôt, here feebly suggested the advisability of returning home. 'For,' said he, 'we will be able to see things better after daybreak.'

'A policeman must be a policeman when duty calls,' I replied haughtily; 'and Sub-constable Green ought to be more fully alive to the responsibilities of his position.—Drive on!' said I to the carman.

He obeyed promptly, looking forward with pleasure to an opportunity of drying his clothes at the kiln-fire.

In a few minutes we had reached the mills. At the sound of the wheels, O'Connor came out of his kitchen, where his servant-man Murphy was seated at his supper. He was surprised to see us stop before his door, and accorded us an Irish welcome to step in out of the rain. We did so nothing loath, as may be imagined, and proceeded to dry ourselves at the kitchen fire standing, for we were too wet to sit down. O'Connor and his man were the only persons in the house still up; all the rest had gone to bed, as we could judge

from the tell-tale snoring from an adjacent room. I told O'Connor our business; how that old Peggy Malone had been murdered down in the glen that night in a most shocking manner, and that we had dropped down to his place, hoping that he might be able to throw some light on the affair, as he lived so near the spot. He was quite horrified at the news, as also was his servant, who, from the moment he heard it, suspended his supper operations, listening with eyes and mouth wide open to the conversation. O'Connor told me that he had been engaged about the mill all the evening until a late hour. Returning from the kiln at ten o'clock or thereabouts, he had heard noises of a confused nature down the road, but had not paid much attention to them, thinking that they proceeded from some drunken party getting home from the market. He had heard the wheels of a cart too coming down the glen road from Dundalk direction; he was quite certain about that; and after a little time another cart, as he imagined, had passed, going in the opposite direction. The scuffling noises took place some time between the passage of the two carts. After that he had gone into his house, and heard no more.

When he had concluded his story, he asked me if I had reasons for suspecting any one in particular as the assassin. I told him we strongly suspected Lawless, and mentioned at the same time the several particulars by which we were led to conclude that he was the man.

At the mention of Lawless's name, the countenance of Murphy, which had all along been quite a study, assumed a frightful aspect; and he blurted out in a gasping tone: 'Why! why! I met Lawless on a cart just as I was lavin' Dundalk. Presarve us from harum! but I was jist goin' to spake to the villain, whin he turned away his head to the wan side. Murderer alive! jist to think of it!' After this fashion he continued to express his horror of the deed and the perpetrator of it. But the hearts of O'Dowd, myself, and possibly the recruit, rejoiced at the disclosure. Here was a fresh reliable clue, not only connecting Lawless with the act, but also affording most valuable information as to his whereabouts.

We hastened to express our thanks to master and man for their timely assistance in the matter, bade them a warm good night, and hurried out of the house. We roused our carman from the kiln-fire where he was drying himself, and told him to drive straight into Dundalk. He was disagreeably surprised at the order, but promptly obeyed; and soon again we were plunging on at a rapid rate through the darkness. On, on we sped. The driver was careful not to draw rein up hill or down brae. He knew now that we were after Lawless, became excited in consequence, and was in momentary fear of an attack being made upon us. I saw him anxiously scan the hedges as we scurried past them, and at intervals grasp his whip in a determined fashion. When we were in any particularly suspicious spot, I could hear him repeat his prayers in a hurried tone; and once he leant down from his seat to inform me that if he fell, the horse and car were to go to his brother Mick, and the house and garden av coorse to the ould woman. Still onward we sped, every moment bringing us nearer the grand climax of our hopes. The links in the chain of evidence

were fitting in beautifully, and we were in high expectations of soon laying our hands upon the perpetrator of the horrid deed.

WATERLOO BRIDGE.

A MUCH desired reform has lately been accomplished—namely, the freeing of two of the toll-bridges that cross the river Thames; the vested interests in each structure, or in other words the shareholders' rights, having been bought for this purpose by the Metropolitan Board of Works, in pursuance of an Act of Parliament passed during the session of 1877.

The bridges which are to be thrown open to the public 'for ever' are nine in number—the chief amongst them being Waterloo Bridge, which has quite a history of its own. It is built entirely of granite, and occupied six years in its erection, the cost exceeding a million sterling—a fact which will go far to explain its failure from a financial point of view, it being well known that the original shareholders have never been recouped, although the toll for many years past has amounted to the extraordinary sum of *twenty-two thousand pounds per annum*.

The opening of Waterloo Bridge, which took place on the 5th October last, is an invaluable boon to Londoners, as from the central position which it occupies it is exceedingly convenient for many thousands of persons whose business carries them backwards and forwards between the Strand and the southern portion of the metropolis, and a great number of whom purposely went round by London or Blackfriars Bridges, to avoid the nuisance and expense of the toll.

The Act of Parliament compelled the Waterloo Bridge Company of Proprietors, and also the owners of the other toll-bridges, to transfer their property to the Board of Works on payment by the latter of a sum representing the fair value of each structure—arbitration being resorted to in cases of disagreement; and the Waterloo Bridge Company having declined to accept the sum tendered by the Board, the latter course was adopted; the result being that this magnificent structure has been secured to the nation for the sum of four hundred and seventy-five thousand pounds, or about one-third of its original cost.

Waterloo Bridge has been in existence about sixty years. The first stone was laid on the 11th of October 1811, when a block of Cornish granite was laid over a cavity containing gold and silver coins; in 1817 the bridge was finished. Its architect was John Rennie, who built it from the design of Ralph Dodd; and it is notable as being the first bridge ever constructed with a perfectly level roadway from one end to the other. It should also be mentioned, in order to shew the costly scale on which the work was carried on, that the small granite pillars that form the balustrading of the bridge, and said to be three hundred and sixty-five in number, were all chiselled by hand, and cost five pounds each for workmanship alone. The approach to the bridge from the Strand was unfortunately not purchased until after the bridge was built, a mistake which added considerably to its cost.

This fine specimen of architecture, which bids fair to last as long as London itself, was opened as a toll-bridge on the second anniversary of the

great battle after which it is named, by the Prince Regent, assisted by the Duke of Wellington; and a silver medal—bearing on the obverse the heads of the Prince and Duke, surmounted by a wreath of laurel, and on the reverse a representation of the bridge with its name and the date of the opening—was struck to commemorate the event.

Many strange scenes and stirring events have taken place on Waterloo Bridge—things that have for the time being attracted the attention of the whole kingdom; and so gloomy a character did it bear at one period of its existence, on account of the numerous suicides which occurred therefrom, that it has been immortalised in one of Tom Hood's most pathetic poems as the *Bridge of Sighs*. Many an 'unfortunate' has passed through the turnstile to take a desperate leap into the gurgling waters beneath; and many a crime has been attempted, and perchance consummated, between its gloomy stone parapets.

One terrible mystery took place in connection with Waterloo Bridge, which created great excitement some twenty years ago, and which will doubtless for ever be associated with its name. We refer to the finding of a carpet-bag containing the severed parts of a human body minus the head, which had been lowered by some person or persons unknown from the parapet, and had lodged on one of the abutments below, instead of going into the river, as was probably intended.

Of course the toll-gate keepers knew little or nothing of what was taking place on the bridge at night, as they could not leave their posts; and the extent of the structure (about a quarter of a mile) was always a great aid to would-be-criminals. With regard to the mystery mentioned however, the man on duty at the gate on the night previous to the discovery of the remains, recognised the carpet-bag when it was shewn to him, and stated that he had himself lifted the ghastly burden over the turnstile for an elderly female of 'rather masculine voice and appearance,' who carried a large brown paper parcel under her arm. On searching the river this parcel was found, and it contained the missing head, but in such a condition that its identity could not be ascertained. All England rang with the details of this fearful mystery, which has remained unsolved up to the present time.

Until quite lately, this celebrated London structure boasted the presence at one of its gates of an old soldier who had in his day been somewhat famous as a sergeant in the Guards, and whose hand had taught General Wyndham, the hero of the Redan, how to wield a sword. This veteran, who had served twenty-one years in the army, also passed sixteen years of his life in alternate day and night work on Waterloo Bridge, until he was compelled at length by failing health to beat a retreat. While engaged as above, he yet managed to find time to write an essay on the best means for promoting the unity and organisation of the working classes, in competition for prizes offered by a firm of London publishers, and received an *honourable mention* for the same from the adjudicators, amongst whom was John Stuart Mill. He also studied the heavens at night in his quiet moments on the bridge, and jotted down his thoughts on the different planets and the relation of the heavenly bodies to each other in the planetary system. Dickens had many a chat with the

old sergeant, who is still living in the enjoyment of his army pension, and listened with eager curiosity to the story of his military adventures. Had the great delineator of human character lived longer than he did, the world would probably have learned far more about Waterloo Bridge and its visitants than we can pretend to give in this brief sketch.

Passengers who have gone backwards and forwards over the bridge cannot have failed to notice the old blind man who sits in one of its recesses day after day, reading aloud by the aid of his fingers from an embossed Bible. He has been at his post summer and winter for about twenty years, and is much respected and esteemed by all who know him. Many who objected to pay the toll, willingly transfer their pennies to him now that the bridge is free; and 'Old Blind George' finds his daily store considerably increased by the wise act of the national legislature.

The view of the Thames Embankment—one of the finest engineering feats on record—from Waterloo Bridge, embracing as it does the noble proportions of Somerset House, and further enhanced by the presence of 'Cleopatra's Needle,' is as fine as any in Europe, and will be enjoyed by many thousands of persons who have abstained, on principle, from crossing the bridge while it was a toll-paying roadway.

The South-western Railway Company are already extending their terminus; and the tramway will no doubt soon be laid down from the old obelisk in the London Road to the foot of the bridge, thus connecting Brixton, Camberwell, Peckham, and even the 'metropolis of shrimps,' as Greenwich has not inaptly been termed, with the Strand.

The Charing Cross foot-bridge was freed at the same time as Waterloo; and the others, for which the valuation money has already been paid, or is about to be paid, are Putney, Old Battersea, New Chelsea, Battersea Park, Vauxhall, Lambeth, and Hammersmith Bridges; and of these we should say that those leading to Battersea Park are the most useful, though Putney Bridge is one of the oldest and most picturesque. Since the acquisition of its 'freedom,' Waterloo Bridge bids fair to become as great a medium of traffic between north and south London as London Bridge itself, and a constant stream of passengers and vehicles daily testifies to its enhanced value. It has been officially reported that in one week after the opening, the foot-passengers on Waterloo Bridge increased from 94,635 to 194,023; and the vehicles from 26,146 to 46,600; and that at the Charing Cross Bridge the foot-passenger traffic had increased from 41,038 to 97,669; the number being more than doubled since the bridges have been toll-free. There can be no doubt that the increased traffic must have a beneficial effect on that part of the metropolis on the south side of the river.

In conclusion we would suggest that this occasion of the opening up of all the toll-bridges in our great City gives England an opportunity of paying a very tasteful compliment to a neighbouring country, which would certainly be much appreciated, and would assuredly go a long way towards further cementing the bond of friendship between us. It is that the name of 'Waterloo,' as attached to the finest of our bridges, should henceforth be dropped, and give place to a more appropriate and inoffensive title. We are quite sure that every

loyal subject would gladly consent to a change, and acknowledge that no more graceful or appropriate name could be found for the famous structure than that of our good Queen 'Victoria,' preserving as it does the connection of a victory with one of peace and prosperity.

ZINC-DUST AND ITS DANGERS.

In former articles in this *Journal* we have directed the attention of our readers to various causes of fires, and have in certain cases endeavoured to suggest a remedy. We extract from our contemporary *The Insurance Record* a paragraph shewing how zinc-dust may become an element of great danger, a hidden risk, under certain circumstances: 'On the 11th of December 1876, twenty casks of a substance known as "zinc-dust," represented as so many casks of colours, and labelled "To be kept dry; liable to heat if damp," were handed over for shipment in the *Lord Clyde*, without, it is alleged, any notice having been given of the dangerous nature of their contents. The casks were put in the main hold of the steamer, and lay there overnight. On the next morning, smoke was seen to issue from the hold. Application of the hose however, extinguished the fire, which was found to have seized some of the goods on board, and to have proceeded from the neighbourhood of the casks of zinc-dust. Subsequent inquiry seems to have proved that while the casks lay on the quay awaiting shipment, one of them suffered damage, and some of its contents escaping, got wet with rain. The damp material was returned to the cask, which was repaired and sent on board with the rest. It is said that when the seat of the fire on board was examined, the contents of one of the casks was found to be at a red-heat. Scientific evidence was laid before the court to prove the dangerous nature of the goods; and the court being satisfied with the evidence, ordered the goods to be forfeited, and fined the parties concerned in the transmission.

'It will no doubt be interesting to many in the profession to know more about this commodity, which may thus have already made, and may again at any time make, demands on the funds by fire-raising on its own account. It is a gray powder, in a state of extremely fine division, and is used in colour-works for making paints. Chemically, it consists of about forty per cent. zinc, two and a half per cent. lead, four per cent. cadmium, fifty per cent. zinc oxide, three and a half per cent. zinc carbonate, with a small portion of non-metallic matter. In consequence of its extremely fine division, rapid oxidation of the metals takes place in the presence of a little moisture at the expense of the oxygen in the water, while considerable quantities of hydrogen are evolved. At the same time, as in all such cases, a considerable rise in temperature takes place, which may, in favourable circumstances, be sufficient to ignite the evolved hydrogen, and so cause inflammable materials in the neighbourhood to be set on fire.

'There is a commodity known in the trade as slate-coloured oxide of zinc, which is actually not an oxide at all, but purely pulverised metallic zinc, which in the process of the manufacture of white oxide has escaped combustion, and been carried over the bridge of the furnace while the

process of oxidation is carried on, and is deposited on the floor of the flues along with a little carbonaceous matter. This material possesses all the properties of the zinc-dust formerly mentioned, by virtue of its extremely fine state of division. It is used for similar purposes, and we believe also that it is sent to America to be employed in some indigo process, the nature of which we are not aware. Like many other things that are cheap in the buying, it may, from its fire-raising tendencies, prove costly in the using to some people; and it is a pity when insurance offices have to suffer risks they know nothing about, and so can neither charge for them nor cause their removal, and we trust that the contribution of facts may prove useful to some in the profession.'

MY WIFE.

I held her, laughing, in my arms,
A blue-eyed child with curls of gold;
She stroked my boyish cheek and said:
'I'll marry you when I am old.'

We met again. Those pretty locks
Were combed and bound about her head,
A little school-girl, staid and shy;
She must not romp with me, she said.

A few more years, and then I found
A blooming maiden, sweet seventeen;
Few were her words and coy her looks;
And yet she loved me well, I ween.

Long did I woo 'mid hope and fear;
My lady was not lightly won;
She hid her love, and thought it shame;
At last my welcome task was done.

I held her, blushing, in my arms;
And then my bashful prize I told
How she had promised long ago
She'd marry me when she was old.

The blissful days sped quickly on,
And I had pledged her with a ring;
But ah! so much too large it proved!
My Love was such a tiny thing.

But yet she would not have it changed,
Though from her hand it oft would slip;
An evil omen, I would say;
While she but laughed with joyous lip.

I left my darling for a space
As nearer drew the wedding-day,
'One little week,' I said, 'and then
I never more need go away.'

I left her healthy, blooming, bright,
The rosy colour in her cheek—
I came to find her wan and white;
Alas! that fatal 'little week.'

Oh, fell Disease, now stay thy hand,
And leave me all I love in life.
In vain I cried; the touch of Death
Was on her, oh! my promised wife!

I held her, dying, in my arms;
The ring fell from her finger cold;
Weeping, I took it; and she breathed:
'I'll marry you when I am old.'

She knew not what she said, poor child;
Gone from her was bright Reason's ray—
But still I keep that ring, and wait
For an eternal wedding-day.

BEE.

Printed and Published by W. & R. CHAMBERS, 47 Paternoster Row, LONDON, and 339 High Street, EDINBURGH.